

Environmental Policy

Community Action Suffolk (CAS) is committed to operating in an environmentally responsible manner and to continuously improve our environmental performance. We recognize the importance of minimizing our environmental impact and the role we play in protecting the environment. CAS will therefore strive to adopt the highest possible standards in all its areas of operation.

This policy indicates CAS's commitment to continuous improvement in our actions to decrease our environmental impact with the main aim of becoming a zero carbon and minimal waste organisation.

The policy outlines our commitment, what CAS will do to identify our environmental impact, and how we will adapt to reduce our impact.

1. Scope

CAS will involve employees and volunteers at all levels of the organisation when implementing this policy internally, and in disseminating information externally about its progress in improving its environmental standards.

We will do this by making our policy publicly available on our website, in our building reception areas, and through our employee induction process. The policy will also be shared with suppliers, potential partners and consultants wherever appropriate to demonstrate our commitment to environmental action.

2. Our Commitment

- Continuously review and improve our environmental performance and integrate environmental management best practice into our strategy and operations.
- To monitor our practices and delivery through the Climate Change cross cutting theme in CAS Strategy 2025-28.
- Comply, as a minimum, with all relevant environmental legislation and seek to out-perform current legislative requirements where practical.
- Integrate environmental considerations into our charitable and business decisions which are in line with our commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Raise our employees' awareness of environmental issues, encourage environmentally responsible behaviour and provide appropriate training where necessary.
- Show sector leadership to inspire and help other charities or groups to understand and improve their environmental performance.
- Measure and take action to reduce waste, pollution, and the carbon footprint of our activities to meet objectives and targets.
- Ensure environmental criteria is considered in the procurement of goods and services where practical.

CAS is committed to reducing the impact on the environment from our operations and service delivery and aims to achieve net zero by 2030.

3. How we will meet our commitments

Meeting the commitments outlined in this Policy and the CAS Carbon Reduction Plan requires a structured and proactive approach including clear objectives for the organisation to work towards, integrating sustainable practices into our daily operations, and ensuring we seek continuous improvement.

We are focusing on the following key strategies to meet those commitments effectively and to continue to reduce our carbon footprint.

These commitments feed into, and form, the basis of focus of our Carbon/Environmental Reduction Plan and should be read alongside this policy. This plan provides an evolving list of actions to reduce our carbon/environmental impact and is led by the Director of Innovation and Business Development, accountable to the Executive Team.

1. Set clear, achievable yet ambitious objectives
 - Develop a range of short and long term objectives – objectives will outline the actions we will take, how they will be measured and lead to continuous improvement methods. Where tasks are longer term or large these will be developed into smaller actionable steps which will include review periods.
 - Data driven objectives – CAS will set objectives built on a thorough baseline understanding of our current environmental performance so improvement is achieved.
2. Establish management systems to measure, manage and monitor our environmental impact for continual improvement.
 - Track and regularly monitor key metrics – These metrics will include the identification of key environmental aspects such as energy consumption, carbon emissions, waste generation, water usage, and recycling rates to assess progress.
 - Conduct regular audits – Audits will be conducted annually to assess if objectives are being met from both a regulatory and organisational perspective. The audits will act as a continual review process to identify further areas for improvement and to measure the success of implemented initiatives.
 - Collect employee feedback – We will collate and utilise the feedback and insights of employees on environmental issues and track the effectiveness of the initiatives.
 - Benchmarking- We will compare the organisations environmental performance against industry measures or best practices to further identify areas for improvement.
3. Raise awareness of our objectives and commitment to environmental improvement through effective communication channels to foster a culture of responsibility.
 - Show leadership commitment to improving the environmental impact of CAS – Leadership commitment will be demonstrated at all levels, from the board of Trustees through to senior and middle management and Officers. All managers or those in position of authority should lead by example to show employees that CAS values and places high importance on its environmental responsibility.
 - Encourage engagement of employees – CAS will involve employees in its efforts by encouraging them to contribute ideas, take responsibility for their own impact and to participate in environmental initiatives set (e.g., recycling programmes). Employees are also encouraged and supported to take part in the Climate Change Working Group if they have a personal or professional interest in that area.
 - Practice sustainable operations throughout CAS – We will integrate environmentally friendly procedures and practices into our daily operations wherever possible. A full

list is detailed in our [Carbon/Environmental Reduction Plan](#) but will include adopting energy-efficient technologies and equipment, reducing our use of paper by using digital technology and choosing sustainable materials and products.

- Provide regular communication – CAS will communicate regularly internally and externally about the importance of environmental responsibility and provide updates on progress toward environmental goals and celebrate achievements.
 - Train our employees – CAS will equip employees with the knowledge and skills required to support its environmental initiatives and objectives. To achieve this regular training will be provided where required to ensure that everyone understands their role in achieving the organisations environmental goals and to ensure that they remain up to date with latest standards.
 - Work with partners – CAS will actively seek expertise from external partners in this space to ensure we are well informed and have an up to date knowledge of key issues and concerns re: Climate Change and can introduce action as required.
4. Integrate sustainable and circular procurement and sourcing into our processes where possible and select products and services with appropriate environmental credentials.
- Innovation- CAS will be receptive to new, innovative technologies and practices that can help reduce our impact.
 - Supplier engagement – We will work with suppliers to ensure their practices align with our sustainability goals wherever possible. To achieve this, we will encourage them to adopt environmentally friendly practices such as reducing packaging.
 - Community and user group involvement- CAS will participate in environmental initiatives or work in partnership with local groups to help build awareness of environmental initiatives.
 - Develop greener building practices- Where possible we will look to adopt sustainable building practices such as using energy-efficient materials, improving insulation, and installing low-energy lighting and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems.
 - Circular economy- We will continue to embrace circular economy principles by focusing on recycling, reuse, and waste reduction. As part of this initiative CAS will question whether a purchase is necessary and if it is whether the amounts required can be reduced or parts reused.

4. Our Commitments and achievements in more detail

Governance

Our board of trustees have overall responsibility for CAS and its strategy. We therefore commit to exploring on an annual basis the impact climate breakdown will have or is having on the communities and groups we work with. This work will be led by our Executive Team and will be overseen by the board of trustees. It should include, but is not limited to:

- Discussing annually at board meetings and/or sub groups how our mission, vision and values intersect with climate breakdown or environmental changes. This discussion should include how the groups we work with will be affected by climate change; where there is opportunity to collaborate and support wider environmental action; and how to embed environmental/climate actions in our strategy, business planning and organisational goals.

- Providing a short statement in our annual report each year outlining the discussions we have had around environmental and climate change and any action we have taken, alongside our aims for the following business year.
- Making time to discuss practical strategic actions annually at board meetings with our sub committees. This could include but is not limited to:
 - Including environmental and climate change on our risk register/s, in terms of the risk it poses to finances, reputation and service delivery
 - Reviewing activity in accordance with Climate Change cross cutting theme in CAS
 - Considering the risk environmental and climate change has to employee retention and recruitment and exploring how we can improve in this space.

Operations

The sustainability of our services is important for the organisations, groups and communities we work with.

As part of delivering our mission in line with our values and charitable objectives, we will assess the environmental impacts of our operations have and set objectives and targets in order to improve our internal carbon emissions. This work will include:

- Monitoring utilities consumption in office buildings
- Promoting and encouraging green travel choices such as cycling, public transport or car sharing wherever possible
- Conscious consideration of the amount of travel necessary for our services and meetings and encouraging green transportation modes and/or providing online access to meetings and events
- Reviewing our waste and educating employees about effective recycling and reducing use of single use plastic where possible
- Communicating with the organisations, groups and communities we work with about the environment and how it is relevant to our mission, vision and values
- Generally increase our communications about the environment and climate crisis, to encourage awareness within our networks and the organisations, groups and communities we work with
- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations

Suppliers and procurement

Environmentally sustainable procurement is the purchase and management of goods, works and services in a way that reduces or negates negative environmental impacts.

To help achieve this we will:

- Seek opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of our procurement process by considering the full lifecycle of products and services, from production to disposal.
- Prioritise local sourcing of goods and services when possible.
- When making procurement decisions, we will prioritise products that are energy-efficient, resource-conserving, and recyclable or biodegradable at the end of their life.
- Establish a system to monitor and assess the environmental performance of our suppliers on an ongoing basis.
- Conduct regular audits to ensure that suppliers are meeting the required environmental standards. Any suppliers that do not to meet these standards will be given the opportunity to improve, or their relationship with us may be reconsidered.

Where applicable and possible we will ask our suppliers to:

- Share environmental policies **or** describe planned actions if a policy is not in place when entering into any contract or agreement with CAS. This will be done via our due diligence processes.
- Work with suppliers to optimise transportation and logistics to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the delivery of goods and services. This may include:
 - Consolidating shipments to reduce the number of deliveries, thereby minimising the environmental impact of transport.
 - Supporting suppliers with sustainable transportation options or carbon offset programs.
 - Encouraging suppliers to use energy-efficient vehicles.
- Work closely with our suppliers to foster collaboration on environmental issues. This includes sharing best practices, providing guidance, and encouraging continuous improvement in environmental management.
- Encourage suppliers to set and achieve their own environmental sustainability goals and to report on their progress regularly.

We recognise that we may not reject suppliers based solely on their sustainability credentials but asking these questions raises the profile of this issue, and that we may partly influence behaviours through this action alone. Our engagement with suppliers is designed to identify suppliers with values which align with our own, and we will make public our preference to work with organisations who minimise their environmental impact wherever possible.

5. What we've achieved so far

Although we still have a lot of work to do, we've made great efforts in reducing our emissions so far. This has been achieved by:

- Making tackling climate emergency one of our development priorities and a focus in our 2025-28 strategy
- Created a Climate Change Working Group with a cross representation of employees at all levels to raise awareness and embed environmental change
- Introduced Blended Working policies which enable employees to hybrid work which reduces our commuting to offices
- Continued to hold meetings online where applicable to remove non-essential business travel
- Moved our training offer and some conferences online as well as face to face, which has reduced the need for participants to travel
- Run our Brightspace building on air source heat pumps
- Heating is set to come on and go off only during office working hours
- Amended payroll processes to become paperless
- Car sharing or the use of public transport is encouraged where possible if travel is required
- Have a undercover bike rack area to encourage staff and visitors to cycle
- Paper hand towels have been removed from toilets and energy efficient electric hand dryers have been installed at Brightspace in the main toilets
- Introduced a planter at Brightspace to grow our fruit and vegetables
- Introduced a battery recycling point
- Left an area of our Brightspace site as a nature wilderness for wildlife
- Phasing out fluorescent lighting in our offices and swapping them to LED
- Recycle paper, cardboard and plastics and auditing our waste segregation to see how we can improve it
- Switched our copy paper supply to one that is 80% recycled
- Reducing our printed literature and office printing/copying
- Moved to digital communications where possible

- Toilet lights are on timers so they can't be left on
- Toner cartridges from photocopiers and printers recycled
- Employees are asked to switch off lights and heating when they are the last one to leave an office

Issue & revision history

Date	Author	Version	Details
16/3/2020	L Bradshaw	Issue 1.0	Redesign of policy
16/1/2021	L Bradshaw	Issue 1.1	LB Review – minor amendments made
11/3/2022	L Bradshaw	Issue 1.2	LB Review - minor changes made throughout
1/1/2025	L Bradshaw	Issue 1.2	One month extension of existing policy agreed
20/2/25	L Bradshaw	Issue 1.3	Full redesign of policy